

LEADERS OF TODAY

An Open Letter to the African Youth On The Occasion Of the United Nations
International Youth Day, 12 August 2013

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It is time for us to practically cast out our fears and approach our future with wisdom, and diligence, for the challenges we face today are up to us to defeat or to surrender. The numerous opportunities we have are up to us to seize or to forgo.

Today we are not only Africans but citizens of the world, united by universal love. Many young people all over the world are making a change in their lives and in their communities, let us not hesitate to connect with them, to share these experiences which are mutually beneficial, so as to bring about the changes we seek.

It is not a pride to be dependent on family or friends. And the government alone cannot provide for all its citizens, so it is up to us to take our lives and destinies into our hands, by actively participating in the affairs of our nations, developing and applying our knowledge and skills, for our welfare and that of our communities and also to enjoy the freedoms and rights of citizenship.

If we have to resolve our generational issues, then it is we the youth who must adjust, because we lead by the lives we live, and not by the political or bureaucratic positions we don't have. Let us learn to address our situations through dialogue and mutual understanding, with maturity and diplomacy, for violence and rebellion shall not solve our problems. What we need is evolution.

We have to try and keep on trying; else, let us stop complaining over things which we haven't tried to change. We have a goal, and only perseverance, patience and tolerance shall make it manifest. As long as there is hope, faith and works, we have nothing to fear.

Let us keep aside all prejudice, and approach life with a free and open mind, yet cautiously preserving our greatest interest at heart, customizing global science, arts, spirituality, morality and technologies to suit our local contexts, as well as expressing our cultures, philosophies, and realities to the world, enlightening them to erase their regular misconceptions of who we as a people and Africa as a continent are.

Let us learn to value our lives, and to maintain both a healthy body and spirit by avoiding substance abuse and reckless behavior. We should enthusiastically seek for knowledge and wisdom; and tirelessly work hard to improve our living conditions.

Truly I understand that life for us is not yet at its best shape as we battle on the daily grind with unemployment, underemployment, absence of valuable guidance, poverty, unreliable

educational and health facilities, high costs of living, little or no access to finance, and all other sorts of problems, however, let our anguish not blind us from the numerous provisions that are already at our disposal.

If the government cannot employ us, then we need to employ ourselves. If our parents cannot assist us, then we need to assist ourselves. Sometimes even amongst us the youth, due to our differences, in education, background, and realities, it is difficult for our peers to understand and to share or support our vision, yet let us not give up on life and set into laziness, for the future is bright for he who toils.

As we join our elders in power and decision making positions, let us set an example for the leaders of tomorrow, living and promoting the values which we currently seek changed. As well as improving our present situations to socially acceptable standards.

For the sake of our own evolution and for the development of our continent, let us avoid approaching politics with the same naivety of yesterday. Our political opponents should not be our enemies, but partners in the development of our economies and to the betterment of our individual and collective lives. We may not think, speak or act alike, but we are one people, united by nature and our common love for our motherland Africa.

It is not only the big choices like changing of leaders or amending constitutions that shall bring about the changes we seek, but most importantly little daily things that affect our lives more, such as the kind of water we drink, our state of health, education, environment and moral fiber especially at individual, family and community levels.

“No-one is born a good citizen; no nation is born a democracy. Rather both are processes that continue to evolve over a lifetime.” - Kofi Annan. We need to awaken the genius in us and as the innovators that we are, introduce a new social value system that shall prove our maturity and win the trust of our people.

We have seen the economy of Nigeria, the democracy of Ghana, the peace in Cameroon, and the role of South Africa in consolidating our African heritage. These are few examples of the numerous positive changes that continue occur in our continent, indicating that the best is yet to come.

Let us do everything possible to live in harmony with ourselves, our families, and all those whom we come in contact with. And let our fundamental principles be landmarks that point the way to justice, peace and love, for we the youth are the leaders of today, not by decree nor by ballot, but by the exemplary lives we chose to live.